

A demand for school social work in Vietnam at present time

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Abstract

The article explores several models of school social work in a number of countries around the world and from the results of sociological surveys, the author analyzes the current situation of school social work in Vietnam and then assesses the students' demand for establishing a social work office in high schools.

Key words: social work, school social work, students

1. Introduction

Social work is a scientific discipline to assist disadvantaged groups in society, such as the elderly, the disabled, orphans, drug addicts, and people with HIV / AIDS, ... (Binh, 2015). Along with the process of industrialization and modernization in Vietnam, various problems have arisen and affected students at school level: school violence, psychological crisis, life values orientation, and career choice, ... (Nhien, 2015).

Therefore, since 2003, the Ministry of Education and Training has issued a code of social work training at college and university levels in the higher education system as a basis to build and develop school social work with an aim to solve the most direct problems related to schools in general and students in particular (Duc, 2015). This article focuses on analyzing the situation, as well as assessing the students' demand for school social work in Vietnam at the present time.

2. Methodology

The author used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect the data. The main research methods include:

- Document analysis: analyzing books, newspapers, magazines, and video clips. related to several problems arisen and school social work in high schools at the present time.
- Questionnaire:

+ Sample size: 256; in which high school students: 156, teachers and educational managers in high schools: 50; student's parents: 50.

+ Sample selection: randomly.

- Focus group discussion: 3 groups

+ A group of high school students: 10 people

+ A group of teachers and educational managers in high schools: 10 people

+ A group of students' parents: 10 people

- Observation: observing behaviors and attitudes, ... of high school students towards their teachers, friends, and family,...

- In-depth interviews: In-depth interviews with experts, students, teachers, educational managers in high schools, and parents: 30 in-depth interviews.

3. Findings

3.1. The difficulties students encounter

As high schoolers, they begin to form a worldview and enable to develop intellectually and socially to have their own point of view; they also have basic orientations in choosing careers for their future. However, students for the time being also face some difficulties and challenges.

According to the results of sociological surveys, students currently have the following difficulties:

Table 1: Difficulties the students currently encounter

No	Difficulties the students currently encounter	Percentage (%)
1.	Difficulties in forming world view	78.9
2.	Difficulties in orientation towards family and relatives	31.6
3.	Difficulties in orientation towards friendship and love	57.8
4.	Difficulties in career orientation	76.6

The data in the above table shows that students have the biggest difficulty in forming a worldview (accounting for 78.9% of the students surveyed). The world view is conceived as a system of views on nature, society, principles, and codes of conduct, and life values orientation. Students also have difficulty in creating a worldview because they are not fully educated about the worldview, they are influenced by many factors: parents, school, surrounding social environment: friends, the mass media, ... But the above factors sometimes are not in an agreement, but there are certain conflicts. Therefore, students have difficulty forming their own worldview. There are also some passive students who do not absorb the advanced achievement, and it is difficult for them to form their own worldview as a result.

The next difficulty that students face is future career orientation (76.6% of the students surveyed). For students, the most frequently asked questions are: what university and college will they choose? What discipline or what major is easy for current graduates to get a job? Whether can they get a job if they study in this discipline? Is this discipline suitable for them? In addition to the orientation of the family, teachers, and schools, students need the right direction of experts so that they can make the best choice for themselves.

The other two difficulties faced by students are the orientation towards family and relatives; and orientation towards friendship and love, in which the students encountered less difficulties in the

former orientation. This is in line with reality because students themselves still regularly communicate and are in close relationships with their families and lineages. Another difficulty that students (57.8%) encountered in the current period is the orientation towards friendship and love. The emotional life of the students is very rich, the need for friendship and personal feelings is significantly increased. At this stage, their feelings become much deeper. They have higher requirements for friendship: desire for sincerity, altruism, trust, mutual respect, understanding of each other, and willingness to help each other, ... Especially at this stage the relationship between male and female students is markedly developed, the scope of friendship relations is expanded. Besides homogeneous groups, there are quite a few mixed groups (both male and female students). As a result, the need for friendship with the opposite sex is strengthened, and for some students, the first strong attraction appears together with the real need for love and deep affection. However, love in this period of time first arises so sometimes they encounter certain difficulties in preserving or maintaining it. With such difficulties, how will students find solutions?

3.2. Solutions to the students' difficulties

To find out how to solve the problems that students encounter, we ask the question: When encountering difficult problems, how do you usually solve it? We obtained the following results:

Table 2. Solutions to the students' difficulties

No	Solutions to the students' difficulties	Percentage (%)
1.	Students solve the problems on their own	66.8
2.	Students ask for help from grandparents, parents, and family members	21.1
3.	Students share their problems with a group of close friends	59.3
4.	Students go to counsel service via phone, newspaper or internet.	10.9

The results from the above study show that 66.8% of students choose to solve problems on their own when facing difficulties. This can be explained that the students are mature enough to solve their own problems. But it may be also because they are still shy or unable to ask and share their difficulties with others, so they do not dare to present their difficulties to the outside. Although they solve their own problems, the problems that they encounter have not been thoroughly solved so they still exist. Through in-depth interviews, some students showed that: "I have solved my problem myself, but then I feel that it still exists so I have not really

overcome those difficulties" (In-depth interview with N, a female grade 12 student at Nguyen Tat Thanh High School).

59.3% of the students surveyed choose to share with a group of close friends when having difficulties. As analyzed above, at this age they have close groups of friends. This is the place where they share and help each other. They often talk and play together, so they really feel confident to be able to address their difficulties, and at the same time find ways to overcome them. However, because the children are at the same age, the same level of awareness, their experience is not much. Therefore, the solutions to their problems are not thorough and highly sustainable. They still need help from

experienced people who have expertise in the field so they can overcome those difficulties.

21.1% of them asked for help from their grandparents, parents, and family members. But the reality shows that normally family members, especially parents, only care about and ask children about their academic results, and moral lessons at school but rarely pay attention to other difficulties that they encountered. So the opportunity for them to find answers to difficulties from the family is very limited.

Only a small number of students (10.9%) turned to counsel services via phone, newspaper or internet, but when they asked, they only dared to ask general questions, not specific and detailed questions about the difficulties that they encountered. The in-depth interview with a Vietnamese-German high school student as followed:

"I just dare to ask general questions, I do not dare to ask specific questions about the difficulties I face because I'm so embarrassed, I am afraid of being known by my friends, ... "(Student K, grade 11).

Thus, it can be concluded that the students have certain difficulties and everyone finds themselves the most appropriate solution. However, the methods that they choose are not really effective and exhausted. Obviously, they need assistance from experts who are specialized in the field so that they can deeply understand the problems they are facing and they can choose and propose the most effective solutions.

3.3. The students' demand for the assistance from social work staff in schools

In recent years in Vietnam, there have been a number of social work services to support people in extremely difficult circumstances, including students. But these services cost money to use and these services do not exist every time and everywhere. Therefore, the majority of students in the high schools in the study have confirmed the demand to use social school services. This is clearly reflected in their demand for the school social office.

Table 3: The necessity for a social work office in high schools

No	Extent	Percentage (%)
1	Very necessary	31.2
2	Necessary	53.5
3	Not very necessary	12.8
4	Not necessary	2.7

The results from the above sociological survey show that up to half of the students surveyed said it was necessary to have a social work office in schools. It can be seen that the students are aware of the role of the social affairs office in schools and the usefulness of the social work office. In fact, there are also some experimental models at Nguyen Tat Thanh High school, such as the school counseling office. However, its limitation is that the time and location of the consultancy are not flexible, the scope of consultancy is limited in certain areas, the consulting staff is semi-

specialized and has no deep expertise. The effectiveness of this school counseling office is not high.

According to the above survey results, only 2.7% of the students said that establishing a social work office in schools was not necessary. The reason why they choose this option is because they have not used or have not known about these services, so they do not clearly see the role and importance of social work office in schools.

In order to assess and reaffirm the students' real demand for social services in schools, the author asked them to complete a questionnaire about their wishes. The survey results show that they are very eager to use social work services in schools. A total of 69.8% of students would like to have a social work office and social assistance activities in schools, only 4.6% of students do not want a social work office in schools.

Regarding the time and place for social work activities in schools, it is desirable for students to be flexible in time to suit their study schedule (perhaps in late afternoon or at the weekend, ...), the place needs to ensure privacy and confidentiality, then they feel confident and relieved when sharing their problems.

The content of social work activities in schools is diverse, the students have career-oriented needs (79.5%), world view-orientated orientations (83.8%), friendship and love orientation (47.6%), and orientation in relation to family and clan (20.7%). This result also reflects the difficulties that they encountered as analyzed above.

In summary, students in high school have a demand for social work activities. Therefore, the establishment of social work office in high schools is now very necessary and should be implemented soon to meet their needs.

4. Conclusion

The results of sociological survey show that students have certain difficulties that need to be solved. They have found the way to solve their problems but their effectiveness is not high and not sustainable. Therefore, the establishment of social work office in high schools is essential to meet their legitimate needs.

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